



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Anchorage Field Office
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Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2591
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>



In Reply Refer To:
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APR 06 2009

Dear Ring of Fire Amendment Stakeholder:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is initiating preparation of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Haines Block. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in the scoping process, and to provide some background information on both the Haines Block and the process of preparing a RMP Amendment/Supplemental EIS.

Our scoping process formally began on March 26, 2009, with the publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent and will be completed with the publishing of the Record of Decision (ROD) and Final EIS. Initial public scoping and agency meetings will be held in Haines, Skagway, and Anchorage. The schedule for public scoping meetings is as follows:

Community	Location	Date and Time
Haines	Library, Community Room	Tuesday, April 28, 2009 6 – 8 p.m.
Skagway	Assembly Chambers	Wednesday, April 29, 2009 6 – 8 p.m.
Anchorage	BLM Anchorage Field Office	Tuesday, May 5, 2009 6 – 8 p.m.

You are invited to any of the public scoping meetings. The purpose of public scoping process and public scoping meetings is to identify relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis and Supplemental EIS alternatives. A range of opportunities for broader participation will be provided throughout the process of preparing the RMP Amendment/Supplemental EIS, including additional public meetings, newsletters, and a project web site: (http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/ring_of_fire_propos.html).

Within the Haines Block the Anchorage Field Office (AFO) administers approximately 321,000 acres. As illustrated in the enclosed map, this area is bound by the Canadian border to the north and east and the Haines Borough boundary to the south and west, encompassing the towns of Haines and Skagway.

Purpose of the RMP Amendment/Supplemental EIS – The ROD for the Ring of Fire RMP deferred the final determination on the establishment of an Area of Critical Environmental

Concern (ACEC) for the Haines Block lands. The ROD requires the BLM to reconsider the application of the Importance Criteria found in the BLM Manual 1613.

The major issue that will be addressed in this planning effort relates to potential impacts on wildlife populations from recreation activities occurring on BLM-managed lands in the Haines Block.

The BLM will analyze the following decisions through the RMP Amendment and Supplemental EIS:

- Whether to designate any of the Haines Block as an ACEC,
- Whether to retain the Haines Block Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) designation, and
- What terms and conditions for special recreation permits in the Haines Block lands should be developed.

If the Haines Block SRMA designation is retained, the BLM, through the RMP Amendment and Supplemental EIS, will:

- Decide whether to change the boundaries of the SRMA,
- Make SRMA decisions as outlined in the Appendix C of the H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook, and
- Develop a Special Recreation Management Plan (SRMP) for the Haines Block SRMA.

The decisions made as part of developing terms and conditions for special recreation permits, delineating a travel management network, and SRMP development are not considered RMP decisions that could be protested; these decisions are implementation decisions subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeal. All other decisions are land use plan decisions and may be protested to the BLM Director.

Under the BLM guidelines, the planning process is integrated with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

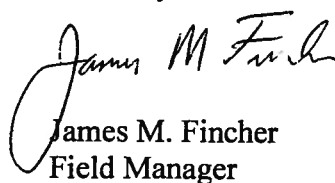
The RMP Amendment/Supplemental EIS is created through an open, public process, utilizing the input from those who have an interest in these public lands, and the surrounding communities. An RMP Amendment, in conjunction with the Ring of Fire RMP, provides future direction for managing BLM's interests in the planning area. The agency is responsible for ensuring that management actions are consistent with both the RMP and RMP Amendment. The EIS will identify the potential impacts that implementation of the RMP Amendment could have on the environment and identify appropriate measures to mitigate those impacts. There will be specific opportunities to review and provide comments on the draft RMP Amendment/Supplemental EIS.

Part of the information the BLM uses in developing the RMP Amendment is derived from the land management plans of adjacent public and private landowners. BLM will consider these resource related documents and information when developing the descriptions of resource uses, and agency and community needs.

To ensure that all factors are considered in the development of the planning and environmental documents, the BLM would like your written comments, recommendations, and requested information by **June 24, 2009**. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

We look forward to discussing this important planning project with you. If you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact me or Beth Maclean, RMP Amendment Team Lead, at the above address, or by telephone at (907)267-1246.

Sincerely,



James M. Fincher
Field Manager

Enclosure

